



Maine Lakes Monthly

-for students

This Month: the "Silver Lining" of Winter

It's said that there's no place like home. Interestingly, the winter homes of creatures living in or around our lakes are no place like yours. While most of us turn up the thermostat or throw another log on the fire when we're cold, lake animals don't have that choice. Instead, they adjust to what nature gives them.



Think about being a brook trout. Your home is wet, and to us humans at least, very cold. But, if you really think about it, what's warmer - winter air or 34 degree water? Compared to life above the ice, fish and other aquatic animals have a nice, even-temperature winter (and they are cold blooded, so they don't need to stay at one warm body temperature, like our 98.6 degrees).

You could also be a vole (a mouse-like mammal). While you can't live under the ice, you can (and do) live under the snow (especially along the marshy edges of some lakes). Below the snow, it stays pretty close to 32 degrees, even if the air is -25f. So, with the aid of your warm coat and a some insulating fat, you could fight off the cold and make it to spring.

While the snow hides your movements, you'd still need to watch out for predators like northern shrikes and owls. If an owl can hear moving prey beneath the snow, it can pinpoint its target without even seeing it. Then, it silently swoops, pierces the snow, and tries to take its prey. Winter is never easy, but animals who inhabit our lake environments, both predator and prey, find a way to make it through the long, cold winter season.

Are you in an MLCI partner class? Have you seen any interesting wildlife on a Maine lake this winter? Talk to your teacher about writing a description of your sighting on the Students' Portal. <http://www.mlci.org/Students/default.aspx>

**Shrikes
prey on
voles.**

**For more info
about northern
shrikes, see
page 2!**

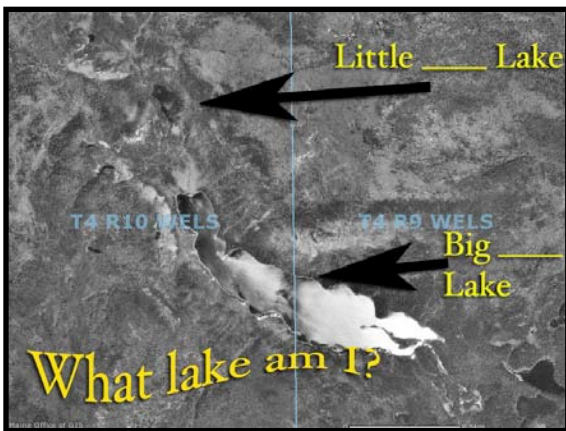


Shrikes Part II: The Impaler Strikes Again!

Northern shrikes are known for impaling captured prey (piercing critters like grasshoppers on a stick or thorn). Who else was an impaler? **Vlad Tepes**, a 15th century prince from Walachia, a region south of Transylvania (Romania). This murderous prince was the inspiration for Count Dracula and was known for impaling his enemies on stakes and posting them around his castle. At least northern shrikes impale prey for food storage, not intimidation!



Can you identify these lakes?



Hints:

- They are located in the heart of Baxter State Park
- They share the same name, though one is known as Big ___ Lake and the other as Little ___ Lake.
- They are not far west of Russell Pond, a small pond with a famous remote campground.
- The lakes are the headwaters for a long stream with a long name (same as these lakes) that eventually flows into the East Branch of the Penobscot River.

- You can find them on Map 50 of a DeLorme Gazetteer.

A Maine Forest Department photo of Little ___ Lake from early in the 1900s (before the land became part of Baxter State Park)



Find out the story behind your lake!

**Last week's Mystery Lakes:
Upper and Lower Hadlock Ponds**

Something Smells
Punny:
 Why don't mountains get cold in winter?
 They wear **SNOW CAPS!!!**



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